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TAGS: [EMIN](#) [ELAB](#) [ASEC](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: PROTESTS AGAINST LOCAL MINING COMPANY IN KOUROUSSA

REF: A. CONAKRY 0480
[B.](#) CONAKRY 0599
[C.](#) CONAKRY 0664
[D.](#) CONAKRY 0698

[1](#)1. (U) Two days of protests in Kouroussa (Upper Guinea) have forced the local gold mining company, SEMAFO, to temporarily call a halt to daily operations. Kouroussa is located approximately eight hours north of Conakry. The protests follow on similar demonstrations in Siguiri last week, and in the Boke and Kindia regions over the past few months (reftels). SEMAFO is a Canadian/Moroccan joint venture.

[1](#)2. (SBU) According to contacts, local youths have been protesting the company's firing of several employees who had staged labor strikes a few weeks ago. It is unclear whether the employees were unionized, but the youths are reportedly arguing that the company did not respect the employees' legal rights. The protestors erected barricades on the main roads leading to the mine, demanding that SEMAFO reinstate the dismissed employees.

[1](#)3. (SBU) A company representative told Pol LES on November 19 that the protest continues and that the mine remains closed. He said that village women have joined the protest, demanding that the company offer employment to their spouses and children. Contact said that local government authorities have been participating in company mediations with the protestors, but that they have been unable to come to any agreement. Efforts to educate local villagers about the company's hiring practices and requirements for employment have been unsuccessful.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Security forces have responded to maintain order and protect public and private property. There have been no reports of casualties.

COMMENT

[1](#)5. (SBU) Civil disturbances around major mining enterprises seem to be becoming increasingly routine. Frustrated by poverty and the general lack of economic opportunity, local populations appear to be channeling their anger towards investors who may or may not have invested in the local communities. These situations tend to calm down after a few days, usually with government intervention, but not without considerable economic cost to investors. There have also been reports of casualties during previous incidents. Business contacts are taking notice and have expressed concern about the increased level of protest activity. END COMMENT.
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